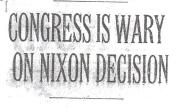


The New York Times/Mike Lien

Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. as he finished reading the President's letter refusing to release the tapes.

Rufus L. Edmisten, left, deputy counsel, and Terry F. Lenzner, assistant chief counsel, delivering the Watergate committee subpoenas to Executive Office Building.



'Let's Wait and See' Appears to Be View-but Many Think President Errs

7/24/73 By MARJORIE HUNTER Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 23 -Members of Congress reacted cautionsly today to President Nixon's refusal to supply tape recordings of his personal conversations to Watergate investigators.

Many Democrats and Republicans said privately that they felt the President had made a grave political mistake. But there appeared to be no genuine move toward impeachment -nor even more than a scattering of support for a proposed House study of whether the House should begin impeachment proceedings.

The watchword around Congress, today as in past weeks, is "Let's wait and see."

Yet, there appeared to be concern in some quarters that the President's action would make it increasingly difficult for Senate and House leaders of both parties to continue to

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Congress Wary on Decision by Nixon

Hoquies on impeachment on the House floor in recent weeks, Congress has maintained what one Democrat has called "an incredible chour of recent to the floor of the floor Congress has maintained what one Democrat has called "an incredible chourt " incredible show of restraint."

"Some few have tiptoed up to it, but no one has really "the President ought to be pre-crossed the abyss yet," Repre-pared to state his case." sentative John C. Culver of Iowa, chairman of the liberal of Minnesota, who lost the Democratic Study Group, said Presidential race to Mr. Nixon today.

Democrat of California, is ex- in time, release pertinent porpected to introduce a resolu- tions of the tapes." tion, probably within the next 10 days, to create a House select committee to study whether there are grounds for impeachment.

colleagues he asked to join in the move, there are no indications at this time of widespread disclose tapes of his "private support for the resolution.

Partial Release Foreseen

for restraint, a number of key decision. Congressional leaders exspecial Watergate prosecutor.

But Senator Mansfield said

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey in 1968, also expressed the Representative John E. Moss, view that "the President will,

Bush Defends Nixon

the Republican National Com- reaction. mittee, also expressed confid-

ident"s decision in refusing to said. and highly confidential talks somewhat the same view when with some of his closest aides" he said: "The people are the and said he felt the American jury, the judge, the govern-In continuing their appeals people would agree with that ment. The people will decide."

"I can understand the Prest- publican National Committee, the information.

Continued From Page 1, Col. 5 dent not releasing the tapes at also expressed the hope that the this time," Senator Mike Mans- President would find a way to keep the lid on a potentially field of Montana, the Senate release the information to the explosive situation.

But Senator Dole was less confident than Mr. Bush that the American people would understand the President's refusal.

"I think he was legally right, but I don't think the American can people will understand that," the Senator said. "They want to believe the President, but I just don't know how much longer the people will wait."

Senator Dole appeared to reflect the view of many in Congress that the key factor in determining where the Water-George Bush, chairman of gate affair may lead is public

"Until public opinion shifts While Mr. Moss said that he had received "positive re-sponse" from some 12 or 15 Mr. Busch drawatically to loud cries for of the Watergate affair. Mr. Busch drawatically to loud cries for impeachment, it's not likely there will be a serious move there wili be a serious move Mr. Bush defended the Pres- here in the House," Mr. Culver

Senator Mansfield expressed

The President's refusal to-"The President knows the day to release the tapes added pressed the opinion today that main thing the people want is to the gathering gloom in the the President would eventually find a way to make pertinent portions of the tape recordings available, both to the Senate available, both to the Senate Watergate investigating com- constitutional responsibility, presentative Paul Findley of mittee and to Archibald Cox, Thank Heavens." Senator Robert Dole of Kan-disappointed that the President sas, former chairman of the Re- had not found a way to release